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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention

Twenty-third periodic reports of States parties due in 2015

Finland*

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Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Implementation of Articles 1-7	3
	Article 1	3
	Article 2	5
	Article 3	15
	Article 4	16
	Article 5	17
	Article 6	31
	Article 7	32
III.	Other recommendations of the Committee	39
	A. International convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families	39
	B. ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples	39
	C. Follow-up of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action	39
	D. NGO Hearings	39
	E. Dissemination of information	40
	F. Core report	40

Annexes**

** Annexes can be consulted in the files of the secretariat.

I. Introduction

1. This 23rd periodic report of the Government of Finland on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination covers the period from November 2011 to December 2015. During the reporting period, a new Non-Discrimination Act was adopted and several projects were realized on the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of non-discrimination. Discrimination of minorities and experiences thereof have been studied, *inter alia*, in nationwide annual studies by the monitoring system, and made visible by publishing updated information on the website of the discrimination monitoring system (www.yhdenvertaisuus.fi). In Finland, the number of asylum seekers has exceeded 30,000, an unprecedented level. The number of people seeking protection from Finland is a challenge to Finland's asylum system and to integration.

II. Implementation of Articles 1-7

Article 1

Population

2. The Committee recommended that the State party provide comprehensive statistical data on the ethnic composition of its population (para. 7).

3. Preliminary statistics on the Finnish population was 5,474,289 persons at the end of 2014. The population increased by 23,020 persons in a year, which is 1,690 persons less than in 2013.

4. Statistics Finland collects statistical data on persons residing in Finland based on nationality, language and country of birth. Statistics may also be compiled according to origin, which means the country of the person's parents, as is the case also in other Nordic Countries. Pursuant to the Personal Data Act (523/1999), the processing of sensitive data is prohibited. Personal data are deemed to be sensitive, if they relate to or are intended to relate, *inter alia*, to race or ethnic origin. However, this prohibition does not prevent processing of data for purposes of historical, scientific or statistical research. Since census is based on registers, Finland cannot produce official statistics on ethnic groups.

5. At the end of 2013, the number of persons with a foreign background exceeded 300,000. According to Statistics Finland, 301,524 persons with a foreign background lived in Finland at that time, which was 5.5% of the whole population. First generation persons with a foreign background, i.e. persons born abroad, amounted to 256,241 and second generation persons with a foreign background to 45,283.

6. Analysed by continent, 59% of all persons with a foreign background had a European background, 24% had an Asian background, and 12% an African background. The largest group of persons with a foreign background consisted of persons from Russia or former Soviet Union. At the end of 2013, they totalled 74,202, which is 25% of all persons with a foreign background. The next largest nationality groups were persons with an Estonian background (40,990 persons), Somali background (15,723 persons) and Iraqi background (11,942 persons).

7. At the end of 2013, there were 153,007 men and 148,517 women with a foreign background. The share of men among persons with a foreign background was 51%, and it has steadily increased in the 2000s. At the end of 2013, the share of men among persons with a Finnish background was 49%, as it was also with regard to the whole population of Finland.

8. Analysed by background country, the differences in gender distribution in these groups were remarkable. The largest share of men was for persons with a British background, 80%. Next came men with a Nigerian, Nepalese and Pakistani background. Out of persons with a Thai background, as many as 85% are women, and persons with a Philippine background, as many as 71% are women. Also the largest groups, e.g. Russian, Chinese and Vietnamese, had a majority of women.

9. The age structure among persons with a foreign background differs clearly from that of Finnish persons. Persons with a foreign background have a markedly younger age structure. Also the age structure between first generation and second generation persons with a foreign background is highly differentiated. For first generation persons, the age group 25-34 was clearly largest. Second generation persons are still young, almost half were still 0-6 years in 2013 and 93% of them were under 30 years.

10. In Finland, everyone decides their own mother tongue. The authorities must, on their own initiative, clarify the registered mother tongue of a person. Nationals of other countries have the same rights as Finnish nationals to use Finnish or Swedish when communicating with authorities. At the end of 2013, the number of persons speaking foreign languages was 289,068, constituting 5.3% of the population. There were 4,869,362 persons speaking Finnish as their mother tongue (89.3% of population), 290,910 speaking Swedish (5.3%) and 1,930 speaking Sámi (0.04%).

11. The largest group speaking a foreign language as their mother tongue were Russian speakers (66,379). Next came Estonian speakers (42,936), Somali speakers (15,789), English speakers (15,570) and Arabic speakers (13,170).

Special Status of the Åland Islands

12. The Åland Islands consist of over 6,500 islands and is the largest Swedish-speaking province in Finland. The Act on the Autonomy of Aland (1144/1991) contains provisions on the status of the Swedish language, on a broad autonomy and on the competence of the Åland Parliament to enact certain laws. The islands have 28,916 inhabitants. Åland is a diverse society where 95 nationalities and 64 languages are represented (88.3% Swedish, 4.8% Finnish, and 6.9% other languages).

13. The special status of Åland is based on a decision of the League of Nations in 1921. In 1917-1921, the Åland population campaigned for the incorporation of the province with the previous mother country Sweden. Finland did not want to lose Åland and offered it an autonomous status. The Åland population, however, did not accept the Finnish offer and the dispute over the island province was finally taken to the League of Nations for resolution. The League of Nations decided that Åland shall belong to Finland, but form an autonomous area.

14. Finland has an obligation to guarantee to the Åland population the right to preserve the Swedish language, their own culture and local traditions. Simultaneously, an international Convention on Åland was also drawn up, according to which Åland was made a neutral region, not to be fortified. Protocol 2 to the Act of Accession of Finland to the European Union refers to Åland. The Protocol recognizes the special status of Aland in international law as well as the right of domicile (regional citizenship) of Åland. The autonomy of Åland is generally recognized and strongly anchored in the Constitution of Finland.

15. Åland is unilingual and Swedish speaking pursuant to the Act on the Autonomy of Åland. The (State) Language Act is not applicable on the Åland Islands (section 7). However, in matters concerning him/herself a citizen of Finland has the right to use Finnish before a court and with other State officials in Åland.

16. One seat in the Finnish Parliament is reserved for the representative of Åland.

Article 2

Government Programme

17. The objective of the Government of *Juha Sipilä*, appointed on 29 May 2015, is to improve sustainable growth of the Finnish economy and employment and to secure financing for public services and social security. The Government realizes structural reforms promoting employment, entrepreneurship and economic growth. As for welfare and health, early support, a preventive approach and effective, cross-sectoral, client-friendly service chains are stressed. The objective is to strengthen the realization of human rights and to enable own choices. The Government promotes work-based immigration, and encourages an open debate on immigration policy, without allowing racism, as well as a tolerant national debate culture that respects human dignity.

Government Report on Human Rights Policy

18. The Government Human Rights Report 2014 (VNS 6/2014) contains the policies of the Government on fundamental and human rights nationally and internationally. According to the development guidelines of the report, The Government pledged to zero tolerance to racism and hate speech in its own activities.

19. The Government stresses the identification, prevention and eradication of multiple discrimination. Understanding multiple discrimination and its incorporation into the legislation is an essential part of elimination of discrimination. The new Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014) intervenes in multiple discrimination such that the new Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, different from the earlier Ombudsman for Minorities, supervises application of the Non-Discrimination Act simultaneously on all discrimination grounds.

National Action Plan for Fundamental and Human Rights 2012-2013

20. The first National action plan for Fundamental and Human Rights was adopted in March 2012. It was a cross-sectoral action plan focusing on concrete projects. The Action Plan comprised 67 projects, distributed over the administrative areas of all ministries.

21. The overall monitoring of the action plan was the responsibility of the Network of Contact Persons for Fundamental and Human Rights. The ministries carried the responsibility for the realization of individual projects of the action plan. A panel consisting of actors from the civic society participated in the monitoring of the action plan.

22. The Ministry of Justice commissioned an independent evaluation of the action plan, analysing its elaboration, contents and implementation. The evaluation recommended a continuation of this work, but proposed clearer choices of priorities and that the action plan be elaborated in connection with the Government Programme and the State budget.

23. The Government is drawing up a second national action plan for the promotion of fundamental and human rights in Finland.

Internal Security Programme

24. The Government made a decision-in-principle in June 2012 on a third Internal Security Programme, named *A safer tomorrow*. The core content of the Programme consists of prevention and resolution of security problems arising in everyday life. The Action Plan describes the situation of everyday security and its challenges, and proposes 64 different

measures. The Programme also contains indicators for the monitoring of the development of internal security.

Cross-Sectoral Action Plan for Reducing Social Exclusion, Poverty and Health Problems

25. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health coordinated a cross-sectoral action plan for reducing social exclusion, poverty and health problems. The action plan was realized during the Government term 2011-2015 to implement the Government's strategic policy to reduce poverty, inequality and social exclusion. The objective of the action plan was to establish a permanent model for social decision-making. Decision-making shall always consider the impact on well-being, health and social exclusion of persons.

New Non-Discrimination Act

26. The Committee recommended that the ongoing revision of the Non-Discrimination Act be utilized to clarify that the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity also concerns private transactions (para. 9).

27. The new Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014) entered into force on 1 January 2015. It provides considerably more comprehensive protection against discrimination, and is applicable on both public and private activities, however, not activities belonging to private or family life or religious worship.

28. Protection against discrimination is the same, be it based on ethnic origin, age, nationality, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability, sexual orientation or another reason related to the person.

29. The obligation to promote non-discrimination was extended to authorities, organizers of education and training, learning institutions, schools and employers. They are obliged to draft a plan for the promotion of non-discrimination. The obligation to draft a plan concerns employers who regularly employ at least 30 persons. The plan must be drafted to cover all discrimination grounds pursuant to the Non-Discrimination Act, earlier the obligation only covered promotion of ethnic non-discrimination.

30. Authorities, organizers of training and employers as well as those offering goods and services shall when needed by introducing reasonable adaptations ensure persons with disabilities equal opportunities to take care of errands, participate in training and obtain work. Also goods and services shall be offered in a non-discriminatory way. Disabilities shall be taken into account in services and e.g. easy access shall be provided, when possible. Employers have already had this obligation to make reasonable adjustments for employers with disabilities. However, this is a new obligation for suppliers of goods and services, e.g. hotels, restaurants and retail trade. Suppliers of goods and services also cover public suppliers of goods. Even though making reasonable adjustments already was an obligation of employers during the previous act, they now have a new obligation to give, at request, a written clarification on the grounds of their actions without delay to persons with disabilities who deem that they have been discriminated against while applying for a job or office because reasonable adjustments were denied, or while in private or public employment.

31. Until now, the possibilities of the person discriminated against to obtain e.g. advice or legal aid have been different according to what the discrimination grounds are considered to be. There have also been differences in supervision of authorities. While the Ombudsman for Minorities earlier monitored application of the prohibition on ethnic discrimination, the new Non-Discrimination Ombudsman monitors all discrimination grounds.

32. The realization of non-discrimination in individual work-life cases is still monitored by the occupational safety and health authorities, but also the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman has tasks related to equality in work-life. The Equality Ombudsman continues to monitor compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men.

33. The Discrimination Board and the Equality Board were merged. The mandate of the new Board covers all discrimination grounds. The Board may issue prohibition and obligation decisions and, pursuant to the Non-Discrimination Act, also confirms reconciliations between parties. The Board may impose a penalty payment to reinforce a prohibition and obligation decision. The Board does not monitor the application of the Non-Discrimination Act in working life.

34. The Act on Equality between Women and Men continues to regulate the prohibition on gender discrimination and equality between women and men. In the reform, provisions on prohibition of discrimination on grounds of gender identity or gender expression were added to the Act on Equality between Women and Men and the provisions on equality plans were revised, and equality planning of learning institutions was extended to also cover comprehensive schools pursuant to the Basic Education Act.

35. In connection with the reform, the offices of the Equality Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Children and the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman were gathered under the Ministry of Justice. This also concerns the Non-Discrimination Board and the Equality Board. The Special Ombudsmen and the new Board are independent authorities under the Ministry of Justice. Until now, the Equality Ombudsman, the Equality Board and the Ombudsman for Children have been under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Ombudsman for Minorities and the National Discrimination Tribunal of Finland, monitoring the application of the Non-Discrimination Act, have been under the Ministry of the Interior.

36. In connection with the reform, also the tasks and projects related to the promotion of equality and non-discrimination pursuant to the new Non-Discrimination Act, as well as the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations were transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Justice. Therefore, the Decree on the Ministry of Justice (106/2015) was amended such that the Ministry shall be responsible for the promotion of non-discrimination and good ethnic relations.

37. Tasks related to the Act on Equality between Women and Men will also in the future be the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

On the Attitudinal Climate Regarding Minorities

38. The activities of left-wing, anarchic, right-wing, or so-called single-issue extremists are not considered to pose a threat to state structures or critical systems in Finland. Left-wing extremist and anarchic movements in Finland have been fairly moderate and peaceful compared to other European countries. However, a number of arson attacks and other, sabotage-like acts of vandalism have been carried out in Finland.

39. Right-wing extremist activity has long been marginal and minor in Finland. However, some activation of local skinhead communities has been detected. Racist activism has been detected in regions that have received relatively large numbers of immigrants over a short period of time. Right-wing extremist violence is mainly manifested in racist-motivated assaults and encounters turning into street violence. The activities of Finnish right-wing extremists largely focus on spreading propaganda over the Internet and distributing stickers and leaflets, etc. Finnish right-wing extremists also have international connections. Individuals with hard-line, extremist views pose a security threat to society that is difficult to prepare for. Identification of such individual actors is highly challenging, as they do not form part of any extremist group The Muslim community in Finland is

heterogenic and mainly moderate. Violent, radical Islamic views are not connected with communities in Finland, but are problematic at individual level.

40. As for the other national language of Finland, Swedish, strong opinions have been presented especially in social media. The status of Swedish as the second national language has been questioned. A serious phenomenon has been threats against Swedish speakers and/or persons working with the Swedish language, e.g. against several journalists, public officials and, *inter alia*, the Swedish Assembly of Finland.

41. Discrimination experienced by the Sámi is mostly related to services in Sámi languages and resourcing. Discrimination against the Sámi is typically structural and difficult to detect, especially outside the Sámi homeland. The Sámi Parliament is worried that the Sámi people and culture, their livelihoods and rights are discussed in a negative manner in social media and in letters to the editor of printed media. A study drawn up for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2013 focused on participation in decision-making of indigenous youth in the Nordic countries. Youth experience it to be hard to constantly have to defend the rights of the Sámi and to explain what being Sámi means. The partially inflamed relations both between Sámi and the original population and within the Sámi communities have contributed to unwillingness of youth to participate in public debates or politics. Women's organizations have remarked that the research data on Finnish Sámi is gender neutral, and very little is known about the life of Sámi women and girls and the discrimination they experience.

42. A study by the Ombudsman for Minorities (as of January 1 2015 the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman) *Different in everyday life – study on experiences of discrimination among the Roma* reveals that the Roma in Finland experience widespread discrimination in all areas of life. A total of 68.7% of the persons interviewed for the study (n=249) told that they had experienced discrimination in at least one area of life in the previous year. Roma have more experiences of discrimination than persons living in Finland with a Somali background or who speak Russian. Part of the respondents tell that there are customs in the Roma community that they experience as harmful for the individual. The study shows that a majority (77.6%) of Roma would be willing to change some features of Roma culture, if it were possible. The results convey that Roma communities are ready to discuss also difficult subjects.

43. According to the Finnish Association of Russian-Speaking Organizations, discrimination against Russian-speaking persons has been more clearly observable during the last two years, *inter alia*, because of the crisis in Ukraine. Negative stereotypes complicate everyday life and integration for Russian-speakers, and at the same time attitudes towards the Russian-speaking population grow more negative. "Russophobia" is still a visible phenomenon, which may fluctuate from an open attitude to silent tolerance. According to the research report *Discrimination on the Finnish Labour Market* that resulted from a research project realized by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Russian speakers are targets of considerable labour discrimination, because Russian speaking test applicants in the empirical study had to send twice as many applications as Finnish speakers to get a job interview invitation. Regional differences may be discerned in attitudes towards Russian-speakers. In Eastern Finland, the level of services provided in Russian is quite good and Russian is also being studied more actively. Increased Russian instruction is also planned for schools in the Metropolitan area.

44. Attacks against Jews in Europe have also increased the need for security measures in Finland. Anti-Semitism appears, *inter alia*, in the form of articles in newspapers.

Anti-Discrimination Work

45. Anti-discrimination work is pursued by many different parties, including the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, other authorities also labour market parties, equality bodies, boards and NGOs. Part of the work to combat discrimination concerns multiple discrimination and is realized in collaboration with several actors. These activities include implementation of the national monitoring system for discrimination, the realization of the National Action Plan against Discrimination, and collection of information on hate crimes.

46. Since the beginning of 2015, the Ministry of Justice coordinates the realization of the national monitoring system for discrimination. The monitoring system for discrimination has three functionalities: (1) to compile and publish updated information and research on discrimination on a designated website, (2) draft an annual discrimination study and (3) to publish a report on discrimination in Finland (*Syrjintä Suomessa*) every four years. Information on discrimination against minorities is gleaned both through the discrimination monitoring system and annual hate-crime studies. In addition, information on discrimination against persons belonging to minorities is also obtained from separate studies made by other actors, such as studies and Eurobarometers conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

47. During the reporting period, the Discrimination Monitoring Group has commissioned the following studies: 1) access to justice for discrimination victims and 2) experiences of discrimination in health and social care services among elderly immigrants. A study on discrimination in education and on consequences for non-discrimination of student guidance will be published in 2015.

48. The Equality is Priority project was implemented in 2007-2015 with financing from ministries and the European Commission. Within the project, the following activities have been carried out during the reporting period to combat discrimination and to promote non-discrimination:

- 2014-2015: A series of training events on the new Non-Discrimination Act for key actors, a non-discrimination campaign for the sports and exercise sector, a training programme to combat discrimination for minority organizations, a programme to test local participation and influencing methods among minorities, a programme for companies on diversity management, a media campaign (TV, social media) named "*Kysy suoraan*" (ask directly) and an international seminar on discrimination against the Roma.
- 2013: An international conference on the Sámi homeland, a media programme for young persons, a Roma portal, a working life diversity programme, a publications series "*Syrjimättömyys*" (literally "Non-Discrimination", 3 publications).
- 2012: The campaign *Attitudes (Asenne Meininki)* to encourage employers to employ youth belonging to minorities, study on methods of non-discriminatory pedagogy, guide to learning institutions on non-discrimination planning, workshops for universities providing teacher training, a section on non-discrimination in Roma housing and a study on discrimination in recruitment.

49. The Ministry of Education and Culture has in cooperation with other ministries provided extensive support to actions for the prevention of racism and discrimination as part of the *Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme* 2012-2015. The Programme stresses the equality and non-discrimination of immigrants, Roma and Sámi. According to an estimate made by the *Advisory Council for Youth Affairs* in 2015, measures to combat racism, discrimination and intolerance have been realized quite extensively.

The Future of Immigration 2020 Strategy

50. The Future of Immigration 2020 Strategy assesses migration flows to Finland and the significance of mobility for a society where the age groups approaching retirement is growing significantly. The strategy examines issues related to immigration, mobility, integration and tolerance of diversity, and contains guidelines and objectives for a Finnish immigration policy. The objective is a policy supporting the construction of a tolerant, secure and diverse Finland that increases the international competitiveness of Finland. An Action Plan for the Immigration Strategy was finalized in March 2014.

Integration Programme 2012-2015

51. The Committee recommended that the State party take concrete measures to implement the Promotion of Integration Act and to realize the Government programme for integration (para. 16).

52. In June 2012, the Government adopted its first integration programme for the period 2012-2015. The starting point of the programme is to promote integration of immigrants through local communities. The objective is participation of immigrants in all areas of society. Language skills, training for professional competence and employment are priority areas of integration promotion.

53. The municipalities draft integration programmes, adopted by municipal councils, to promote integration and strengthen multi-sectoral cooperation. The integration programme contains a plan for adaptation of municipal services for immigrants. A municipal integration programme also contains a plan on measures to promote and support integration for different groups as well as a plan for the promotion of good ethnic relations and intercultural dialogue.

54. Problems that immigrants face are to some extent differentiated by gender. NGOs have stressed that it is important to better take into account special needs of both women and men in the integration process, to increase gender sensitive integration and research to support it. In Finland, many women are excluded from integration measures, especially language training, because the measures are often labour related. Unemployment among immigrants, and especially among immigrant women, is difficult. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy has several projects to improve the labour market status of immigrant women.

55. In the study *Integration for all – immigrants with disabilities and integration training* (2013) elaborated by *Hilma*, a support centre for immigrants with disabilities, the realization of the right of immigrants with disabilities to integration, especially integration training, was analysed. The study focused on language training. According to the study, persons with disabilities are not taken into account, or are taken into account in a prejudiced way, in the planning of integration measures. Immigrants with disabilities are excluded from, *inter alia*, labour policy initiated integration training. The guidelines of the national Disability Policy Programme (VAMPO) stress the equal rights of persons with disabilities to education and employment.

Action Plan on Integration

56. Integration services provided by Finnish authorities must be reviewed to meet the needs of the growing number of immigrants. The action plan on integration takes account of the current situation where it is anticipated that people who need integration services will increase by 10,000 next year. The action plan was adopted by the ministerial working group on migration on 27 November 2015. The action plan emphasises the importance of identification of immigrants' skills, their smooth placement in municipalities and their employment. The plan includes over thirty actions, which also take account of the need to

provide immigrants with basic municipal services. Immigrants are required to actively participate in integration measures.

Action Plan on Asylum Policies

57. The Government published its action plan on asylum policies in December 2015. The aim is to stem in the short term the uncontrolled influx of asylum seekers into the country, to contain asylum costs and to integrate efficiently those who have been granted asylum. The Government will also make the asylum and return processes more effective and contribute to the management of the EU's external borders.

58. The Government has set up a ministerial working group on migration on in September 2015. The group is chaired by the Minister of the Interior. It has regular meetings. The group compiles and maintains situational awareness of the asylum seeker situation and monitors integration.

Immigration Barometer 2012

59. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for integration and for monitoring of integration and ethnic relations. The monitoring system is composed of indicators describing circumstances of immigrants, an immigration barometer and service surveys for municipalities and Employment and Economic Development Offices. Based on information gleaned from different parts of the monitoring system, a review is compiled for the assessment of integration measures and their results and of the state of ethnic relations. The review is published every four years.

60. In 2012 a more extensive barometer survey was realized for immigrants for the first time, the sample being 2,750 foreigners. The chosen respondents represented the largest immigrant groups, excluding Swedish citizens. The respondents were citizens of Estonia, Russia, Somalia, China, Thailand, Iraq and Turkey, having moved to Finland in 2007-2009.

61. Work, language skills and security were the most important preconditions for successful integration of immigrants according to the experience of the respondents of the barometer. Immigrants had positive experiences of many public services and trusted them. On the other hand, 24% of the respondents told that during the last year they had experienced discrimination in the form of hostile or racist expressions when using services or at public places, in working life situations or as violence.

62. The Act on the Promotion of Integration entered into force on 1 September 2011. The new integration measures pursuant to the Act had not yet reached the respondents of the barometer. E.g. initial guidance has been developed in recent years.

The "Good Relations" Project

63. The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to promote understanding and tolerance among different ethnic groups residing in its territory (para. 16).

64. The *Good Relations* project, coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, was realized from November 2012 to October 2014 in cooperation with the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations and three of the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. The objective of the project was to prevent racism, xenophobia, anti-Roma sentiments and other types of intolerance by promoting good relations between population groups. In addition, the objective of the project was to define good relations, elaborate indicators for good relations (attitudes, personal safety, interaction with others and participation and influencing), to test the indicators and to disseminate information on

results both nationally and to EU member countries. The project received funding from the European Union programme Fundamental Rights and Citizenship.

65. In the project, indicators for measuring good relations were elaborated and a framework for good relations was published in Finnish, Swedish and English. During the project, examples on local actions for the prevention of xenophobia were collected and different means for the promotion of good relations were tested. Two publications were issued on the basis of the aforementioned: a guidebook for the promotion of good relations and prevention of xenophobia (in Finnish, Swedish and English) and a publication on regional cooperation to combat intolerance with good examples on readiness of Swedish municipalities to combat xenophobia (Finnish, Swedish). The results of the project are utilized in the new decree detailing the objectives and activities of the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations appointed by the Government.

66. The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) chose religious and cultural dialogue as the nationwide topic of 2014. Two special topics were raised during the year: integration promotion by religious communities and dissemination of information on this work, and influencing prejudice against religious and cultural minorities on the nationwide and local levels.

Follow-Up of the Roma Policy Programme

67. The Committee recommended practical measures for the implementation of the Roma Policy Programme (para. 15).

68. The Roma Policy Programme was adopted in 2009. The Roma Policy Programme has six priority areas and ten action guidelines. The Programme contains 147 measures, and their realization is distributed on several administrative branches. In 2012, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a working group to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Roma Policy Programme. The Working Group had 24 members, half of which persons with a Roma background. The term of the Working Group ended in 2013.

69. A report was drawn up on the Roma Policy Programme, based on information gleaned in 2013 from ministries and other responsible actors, from municipalities during their hearing and from Roma e.g. through the hearing of organizations. The report examines how the objectives of the programme have been realized in the areas of employment, education, health and social services, anti-discrimination activities and housing. The report also explains how the Programme has been realized regionally and locally.

70. The Roma Policy Programme has improved awareness and coordination of Roma affairs nationally. The measures to be realized by different ministries were implemented best, part of the measures saw significant improvements. Especially within education, remarkable improvement has taken place. Locally, implementation was challenging. Special challenges can be identified within the areas of employment and adult education of Roma. In addition, *women's organizations have remarked that the Roma policy programme is incomplete since it does not have a gender perspective.*

71. Hearings with municipalities and NGOs, and nationwide seminars for the Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs are a sign of a well-functioning cooperation among the Roma, the state administration and the municipalities. Active participation of the Roma population in the implementation of the programme reflects trust among the actors. Trust is built in part by the Finnish practice to involve the Roma in decisions that concern them.

All parliamentary parties committed to combat racism

72. In 2015, all parties in Parliament signed the Charter of European Parties for a non-racist Society, and in this way committed themselves to combat all forms of racism. The

initiative to sign the Charter was taken by the Finnish League for Human Rights, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations. The parties committed to defend human rights, to reject all forms of racist violence and incitement to racial hatred. They also committed to refuse to display, to publish or to distribute views and positions which stir up or invite prejudices and hostility.

The Network of Contact Persons for Fundamental and Human Rights

73. The Government network of contact persons for fundamental and human rights will, *inter alia*, draw up a second National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights, analyse the situation of fundamental and human rights in Finland and the implementation of Finland's human rights obligations and commitments. Thus also the implementation of the CERD's concluding observations is monitored by the Network. Each ministry is represented in the network. Also the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Office of the Chancellor of Justice and the Human Rights Centre participate in the network. The second term of the network is from 8 October 2015 to 31 December 2019.

National Human Rights Institution

74. The Committee recommended that the State party establish its national human rights institution in a manner that is fully consistent with the Paris principles (para. 8).

75. The Human Rights Centre started its work at the beginning of 2012. It was established by Act (535/2011), which defines the mission and composition of the Centre. The mission of the Centre is to promote information distribution, training, education and research related to fundamental and human rights, elaborate studies on the realization on fundamental and human rights, make initiatives and issue statements for the promotion and realization of fundamental and human rights, participate in the European and international cooperation for the promotion and safeguarding of fundamental and human rights, and to perform other similar tasks for the promotion and realization of fundamental and human rights. The Human Rights Centre does not consider complaints or other individual cases.

76. The Human Rights Centre has a Human Rights Delegation with 20-40 members. The Centre is linked to the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Presently the Centre has a Director and two expert level officials.

77. Provisions on the mandate of the Parliamentary Ombudsman are laid down in the Constitution of Finland (section 109). In addition to the Constitution, provisions on the activities of the Parliamentary Ombudsman are contained in the Act on the Parliamentary Ombudsman (197/2002). These include, *inter alia*, examining complaints, realizing inspections and issuing statements.

78. The Human Rights Centre, the Human Rights Delegation and the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman together form the Finnish National Human Rights Institution. At the end of 2014, it was granted an A status according to the Paris Principles.

Anti-Discrimination Work in Åland

Integration

79. The Provincial Administration Act on the Promotion of Integration (*Landskapslagen om främjande av integration* (ÅFS 2012:74)) took effect on 1 January 2013. The Act is supplemented with application directives, in effect as of 24 January 2013. The Act and the directives include the promotion of good ethnic relations between different population groups. Non-discrimination and equal treatment are important factors for generating a feeling of inclusion.

80. In February 2013, the Provincial Government of Åland adopted its programme for promoting integration in 2012-2015. The objectives set and measures planned under the programme are being monitored and evaluated continuously. Integration measures are being co-ordinated and promoted e.g. by clarifying the division of responsibilities between different authorities, by creating networks and platforms for joint action and co-operation, and by targeting information. In 2012-2015, the priorities of the Ålandic integration policy are access to the Swedish language, education and training, gainful work and employment, support to immigrant children and their families, the fostering of positive attitudes, and zero tolerance of racism.

81. The Provincial Government states in the programme that discrimination and equal treatment have a connection with the equal human dignity of all people and with the basic UN conventions, and are to be seen as manifestations of political will. Furthermore, the Provincial Government notes that equal treatment and non-discrimination, combat against racism and the promotion of a climate of positive attitudes constitute the basis for a successful integration policy in Åland. To achieve this, all people in the province must be active at all levels.

Experienced discrimination

82. The promotion of integration includes monitoring and evaluation. In 2013, the Provincial Government commissioned a study from Statistics and Research Åland (ÅSUB), to chart the situation of the immigrants in Åland from a number of aspects, including experienced discrimination. In January 2015, ÅSUB published a report on the study, describing the experience of social life in Åland among non-Nordic immigrants in the province (*Att leva och bo som inflyttad på Åland – utomnordiska erfarenheter av åländskt samhällsliv*).

83. The report is based on an enquiry sent to 1,354 persons aged 18-75 years, born outside the Nordic countries and speaking a native langue other than Swedish. The enquiry was conducted in five languages: Swedish, English, Estonian, Latvian and Romanian. The total of 571 answers given to the enquiry means an answering percentage of 42%. The enquiry asked whether the respondent had encountered discrimination during the last 12 months. One fourth (24%) of all respondents experienced that someone had discriminated against them during the last year. The most common grounds for discrimination were language (62%), gender (45%) and ethnic origin (43%).

84. These results can be compared to those in ÅSUB's report on the discrimination experienced in the Ålandic society in 2010 (*Upplevd diskriminering i det åländska samhället år 2010*). According to this report, nearly half of all respondents with a non-Nordic native language had experienced discrimination in Åland. Of these respondents, 80% reported that they had encountered discrimination for their national or ethnic origin, more than half for their foreign name, more than 40% for their language, and approximately one fourth for their appearance.

The activities of the Åland Non-Discrimination Ombudsman

85. A Provincial Act on the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman of Åland (*Alands ombudsmannamyndighet*) (ÅFS 2014:33) entered into force on 1 September 2014. This authority is independent and administratively under the Government of the Province. Within the competencies of the province, the Ombudsman prevents and combats discrimination based on ethnic origin, religion or other conviction, disability, age or sexual orientation. The Ombudsman also combats and prevents gender discrimination within the competence of the Province. All inhabitants of Åland constitute the target group.

86. Statistics over the cases recorded by the Åland Discrimination Ombudsman in 2011-2015 show 13 cases of ethnic discrimination (7 women, 6 men). During that period, a total of 49 cases have been recorded. Moreover, the Ombudsman has provided counselling by telephone. In 2011-2015, no legal proceedings have been instituted in any of the cases.

87. Discrimination issues fall within the competence of either the Province of Åland or the State. Persons with an employment contract governed by private law in Åland and those with such an employment contract with the province or a local authority fall within the scope of the national legislation. Possible cases of ethnic discrimination against these persons are referred to the national Discrimination Ombudsman.

88. According to the Provincial Government manifestations of xenophobia have increased in the public discussion in Åland during the last year. In future, continued development efforts, work and activities will be needed in order to prevent discrimination and to promote equal treatment, good ethnic relations and integration in the province.

Article 3

Roma and Housing

89. According to a study by the Ombudsman for Minorities (as of 1 January 2015, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman) 48.5% of Roma respondents had encountered discrimination based on their ethnic origin during the previous year when applying for a state-funded rental apartment, i.e. typically a municipal rental apartment. A total of 54.7% of Roma respondents have experienced discrimination based on their ethnic origin when trying to rent or buy an apartment on the private housing market.

90. The Ministry of the Environment carried out a study on Roma housing and non-discrimination in 2012. Representatives of the National Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs participated in the steering group of the study. The study mapped housing problems of the Roma and possible solutions. Especially realization of non-discrimination was analysed both with regard to the original population and within the Roma community. The topic was analysed through complaints filed on the Roma housing situation, questionnaires to housing actors, interviews with key persons and Roma persons. The study brought to light the complex nature of housing issues of the Roma.

91. In Finland, the Roma live in the same areas as other Finns, and Roma segregation or ghettos are unknown. The wish of the Roma has been that many Roma should not live in the same area to avoid social stigmatization. According to the study, housing problems of the Roma are not related to standards of living but to obtaining an apartment. According to the view of the National Advisory Board on Romani Affairs the biggest problem is the accumulation of social problems (low income, non-optimal housing market, high cost of private rental apartments and discrimination herein).

92. The Ministry of the Environment, the National Action Plan against Discrimination and regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs arranged four regional seminars, where the Roma and housing actors together handled housing problems of the Roma, which have regional features. In addition, a series of public meetings was carried out as an internal process, where the avoidance obligation and the permission to move were discussed. The section on Roma housing resulted in a brochure *Are you looking for a rental apartment?*, which provides guidance on a very practical level especially in housing issues problematic for the Roma.

Housing of Immigrants

93. The Government programme to reduce long-term homelessness 2012-2015 (PAAVO II) endeavours to eradicate long-term homelessness by 2015, to intensify utilization of social rentals and prevent homelessness. In 2008-2011, during the first term of the programme, significant results were obtained through the construction of many apartments in a short time and support services. The reasons for homelessness among immigrants have been studied and the reduction programme contains measures for the reduction of homelessness among immigrants.

94. Information on housing-related discrimination-experiences of immigrants and the Roma is also to be found in a study by the Finnish League for Human Rights of 2012. When all channels for housing applications are analysed jointly, a total of 16.4% of Roma and 14.9% of immigrants encountered different treatment when applying for an apartment. The findings are congruent with the study of the Ministry of the Environment on non-discrimination in housing for the Roma.

95. The position on the housing market of immigrant youth is weaker than that of youth from the original population. This is the conclusion, *inter alia*, of the study *Wishes and Reality – Youth and Housing 2014*, commissioned by the Ministry of the Environment, the national Advisory Council for Youth Affairs (Nuora) and the Finnish Youth Housing Association (NAL). Low-threshold housing services for young persons are needed, and they should also provide guidance to young persons with an immigrant background.

Article 4

Racist, Discriminatory and Xenophobic Content on the Internet

96. The Committee recommended that the State party reinforce its efforts to combat incitement to racial hatred and racial discrimination on the internet (para. 10).

97. Common offences related to hate crimes include ethnic agitation, defamation or illegal threat. Hate crimes or hate speech are not mentioned separately in the criminal legislation. An amendment to the Criminal Code (511/2011) that entered into force in June 2011 further enhanced possibilities to intervene in racist and other hate speech, and other racist offences.

98. The Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems (ETS No. 189), entered into force in September 2011 in Finland.

99. In Finland, efforts have been made to develop internet supervision, e.g. by increasing resources and by increasing cooperation with web-service producers. Online supervision has also been centralised, in order to link it to nationwide crime prevention and intelligence structures. An essential part of a more effective monitoring of the internet is to inform citizens to actively report crimes observed in information networks through a tip system to be developed. Anybody may leave a tip on the Net Tip service (Blue Button) of the Police on websites observed to contain, *inter alia*, racist and misanthropic content. The net tip website is in Finnish, Swedish and English.

100. During the reporting period 2011-2015, a group of prosecutors has specialized in racist and other hate crimes in the Finnish Prosecution Service. The specialization system of the Prosecution Service currently undergoes a total reform. The renewed system shall be taken into use in the beginning of 2017. In 2011 and 2012, the Prosecutor General also organized training for prosecutors on crimes related to freedom of speech and racist crimes.

101. The annual report of the Police University College *Hate crime in Finland known to the police* also provides information on racist crime on the internet. The share of suspected hate crimes on the internet known to the police is very small. According to a report published in 2013, there were 45 suspected racist crimes on the internet, i.e. approximately 4% of all crime scenes.

102. The Police is also active in the social media, such as in IRC Galleria, Facebook and YouTube. For instance, web-based community-police officers are using their own name on the internet and enable easy access to the police.

103. The police participated in a working group established by the Prosecutor General mandated to assess what constitutes punishable dissemination of hate speech and how different online actors are responsible for it. The working group also mapped other related matters of interpretation. The working group submitted its report "Dissemination of Punishable Hate Speech on the Internet" in December 2012.

104. The *Ei vihapuheelle* (No to hate speech) movement is part of the No Hate Speech Movement. The national coordinator of the campaign launched by the Council of Europe is Plan Finland Foundation. The campaign is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Finnish campaign was launched in March 2013 and it continued until spring 2015. The objective of this youth movement is to promote freedom of speech and non-discrimination on the internet and elsewhere.

Article 5

(a) The Right to Equal Treatment before the Tribunals and All Other Organs Administering Justice

Supervision of Foreigners and Prohibition of Ethnic Profiling

105. The Committee further recommended that ethnic profiling be avoided, also by strengthening relevant internal instructions of the police (para. 16).

106. The National Police Board issued an updated instruction on the supervision of foreigners on 20 December 2013 (2020/2013/5427).

107. The instruction prohibits ethnic profiling. The amendment to the Aliens Act that entered into force in May 2015 carries a strong prohibition on ethnic profiling, since surveillance of aliens may not be based on ethnic profiling. The contents of the instruction of the National Police Board on supervision of foreigners as concerns the prohibition of ethnic profiling correspond to the amendment of the law. The amendment clarifies the principles of the surveillance and the powers of the authorities. Clear legislation on alien supervision increasingly leads to seeing this supervision as normal state activity, where non-discrimination and human rights shall be respected. The police and the Border Guard are given the right to carry out surveillance of foreigners also in public premises. Such places include e.g. restaurants, commercial premises and construction sites. The reforms improve the possibility of the authorities to cooperate, *inter alia*, to combat the black economy. During supervision of foreigners it is also possible to detect human trafficking and other similar offences.

(b) Right to Personal Security and Protection against Violence

Immigrants in Finnish Prisons

108. The number of prisoners in Finland is still among the smallest in Europe. In 2014, the average number of prisoners was 3,097, when it was 3,175 the previous year. The share

of foreign prisoners has increased slightly. In 2014, their share was 16% of prisoners, 483 persons. In 2000 their share was 5.9% (169 persons).

109. In June 2012, the Criminal Sanctions Agency published a study on everyday life in prisons called *Being an Immigrant in a Finnish Prison* (in Finnish). According to the study, both other prisoners and guards were, *inter alia*, name-calling prisoners with a foreign background. For security reasons, immigrant prisoners and especially prisoners with African origin are usually held in closed sections of the prisons with limited possibilities to participate in different prison activities. The prisoners may be in an information vacuum, if the internal information of the prison is provided only in Finnish.

110. In 2015 a study was completed at the Criminal Sanctions Agency on prisoners in isolation and closed conditions in Finland. 25% of the prisoners were foreign citizens. Since the share of foreign prisoners at that time was 16% of the whole prisoner population, the findings indicate that foreigners were overrepresented in closed sections. Because race and ethnic origin are not registered in the prisoner information system, it is impossible to make more precise assessments on the relevance of racial discrimination regarding placement in sections.

111. In 2014, the Criminal Sanctions Agency published "*Everyday life in prison – a guide for prisoners arriving in a closed prison*". The guide covers important rights and duties of prisoners and practicalities of prison life. Prison specific Arrival guides have also been translated by the prisons to the languages most frequently needed. In addition to written information, foreign prisoners are given information on practical issues orally. However, a common language is not found in all cases. Interpreters are used when dealing with official matters.

112. In Finland, equal treatment of prisoners is required by, *inter alia*, the Prison Act and the Non-Discrimination Act. The conditions of the deprivation of liberty should not constitute an additional punishment. Pursuant to the law, the authorities shall promote non-discrimination systematically and change circumstances preventing realization of non-discrimination. Special needs of immigrants related to religion, language, living arrangements and reception of civilian visitors are taken into account in prisons.

113. In February 2015, a new non-discrimination and equality plan of the Criminal Sanctions Agency for prisoners and clients serving community sanctions entered into force. The plan promotes the equality of the clients of the Criminal Sanctions Agency and informs how the Agency in its own activities may promote equality and prevent discrimination and take action with regard to it. In addition, the plan aims at increasing awareness about minorities.

Inspections by the Parliamentary Ombudsman

114. When the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment entered into force, the Parliamentary Ombudsman was nominated the national supervisory body. The amendment to the Act on the Parliamentary Ombudsman entered into force on 7 November 2014.

115. The task as national supervisory body also strengthens the Parliamentary Ombudsman's work to combat discrimination in closed institutions. During inspections to closed institutions, attention is always attached especially to the treatment and possible discrimination of foreigners and persons belonging to minorities. E.g. during the inspection of the Helsinki prison on 20 January 2015, a special theme was the treatment and conditions of Finnish Roma prisoners. During that inspection, several discussions were held with Roma prisoners. Even though no illegal practices were revealed during the inspection, the Parliamentary Ombudsman considered it important that the status of Roma prisoners, their conditions and possibilities to participate in activities are actively improved.

The Action Plan for Reduction of Violence against Women

116. In Finland, many different kinds of efforts have been made to prevent and eradicate violence against women. A cross-sectoral working group has been appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, consisting of public officials, to coordinate, supervise and monitor progress made in the reduction of violence against women in all age groups, including partner and domestic violence. The working group also acts as the steering group for the National Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women.

117. The objective of the action plan is to address violence against women preventively by influencing attitudes and behaviour, preventing recurrence of violence, improve the position of victims of sexual violence and crisis support and assistance for them, develop means to identify and intervene in violence experienced by persons in vulnerable situations and to increase knowledge and know-how among authorities and professionals of prevention of violence against women and of helping victims. A comprehensive approach means that the action plan contains extensive measures on prevention of violence, protection of the victim and support measures as well as on bringing perpetrators to justice.

118. An example of the implementation of the action plan is the MARAK project (multi-professional risk assessment method) aiming at identification of victims with an increased risk of falling victim of violence, and ensuring their protection from continued violence through multi-professional coordination. The groups that are in the most vulnerable situation are immigrants and persons with disabilities who may not have a language with which to communicate this matter.

119. In 2013, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy realized in cooperation with *Väestöliitto* (Family Federation of Finland) training on the special features of prevention of violence against immigrant women at seven events in different parts of Finland. The training focused on, *inter alia*, multicultural work with couples and families in general, special features of violence against immigrant women and prevention of genital mutilation of women and girls and honour violence.

120. On 8 December 2015, the Government published its action plan on asylum policies. According to the action plan the aim is to enhance communication and support the integration of asylum applicants who have been granted a residence permit by disseminating information on Finnish "ground rules", including rights and responsibilities.

121. Municipalities have a general responsibility to promote gender equality and non-discrimination. Municipalities work to prevent partner violence and produce services for persons having experienced partner violence or threat thereof in multi-professional cooperation within social and health care services as well as with other authorities and organizations. Municipal services influence attitudes that promote equality and non-discrimination, value gender equality and accept diversity, *inter alia*, in early childhood education and basic schools as well as in cultural, youth and leisure activities.

122. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence entered into force in Finland on 1 August 2015.

Study on Domestic and Partner Violence Experienced by Roma Women

123. A study on domestic and partner violence experienced by Roma women was carried out at the initiative of Roma women. The study was based on interviews and questionnaires as well as research literature. According to the results, Roma women encounter the same kind of serious domestic and partner violence as women of the original population. The study also highlighted Roma culture features influencing women's readiness to seek and get help. These are caused by the control exerted on individuals by the community and by actions in conflict situations. When experiencing violence, Roma women have to take into

account the reactions of the community. Telling about the violence and seeking support from authorities may also lead to escalation of violence and conflict between families. Violence experienced by Roma women stays hidden even more easily than that of women from the original population. Roma women are hierarchically inferior to men, which gives men the possibility to abuse their status as the head of the family. According to Roma cultural traditions, also the children stay with the husband and his family, if the wife wants a divorce and a new relationship. This constitutes an obstacle for women to leave violent relationships.

124. It is very important for Roma women to get help from outside the community, because the possibilities of Roma women to act and seek support from persons close to them are limited in cases involving violence. Shelters and other support services are important for Roma women. The recommendations of the study are mostly related to increased knowledge of Roma culture and the situation of women in connection with violence. The identification of features that support and hide violence is also needed within culture, as well as clearer collective condemnation of violence.

125. According to a study by the Ombudsman for Minorities (now the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman) 37.7% (n=86) of Roma respondents (n=228) saw that the status of women within Roma communities is linked with special problems. A total of 62.8% of the respondents (n=86) mention equality between women and men and the subordinate role of Roma women in relation to men.

Action Plan for the Reduction of Disciplinary Violence against Children

126. Disciplinary violence is prohibited pursuant to the Act on Child Custody and Right of Access (361/1983). The objective of the *Action Plan for the Reduction of Disciplinary Violence against Children 2010-2015* is to strengthen the dignity of the child and to increase mutual respect between children and parents. Immigrant families constitute a target group for reduction of disciplinary violence. Immigrants often come to Finland from countries where disciplinary violence is not prohibited by law. They need information in their own language on Finnish legislation and the rights of the child as well as support and guidance on how to raise children without violence.

127. The new Social Welfare Act (1301/2014) obligates to take into account the primacy of the interest of the child in all social welfare measures concerning children. The law provides for the obligation of the municipality to offer services for different support needs, such as economic subsistence, housing, prevention of social exclusion, support needs related to domestic and partner violence, sudden crisis situations and to secure balanced development and well-being for the child. The Act stresses early support instead of problem solving.

128. The Ombudsman for Children reminds that the legislation has had a zero tolerance for disciplinary violence already for a long time, and disciplinary violence has decreased clearly, but, nevertheless, one in five ninth graders still report disciplinary violence, and one in ten of sixth graders. The corresponding numbers are 45% and 27% for psychological violence. The data are based on the child victim study of 2013.

Victims of Human Trafficking

129. The system of assistance for victims of human trafficking operates as part of the reception centre in Joutseno. Assistance to victims of human trafficking may include accommodation, health and social services, legal guidance and counselling, security arrangements and other support measures needed by the victim. A victim with a municipality of residence in Finland obtains basic services from that municipality. The assistance system may provide guidance and support also for such persons.

130. Suspicion of victimization in human trafficking suffices for admission into the Assistance System. The Assistance System has also admitted victims of crimes similar to human trafficking, such as aggravated pandering, extortionate work discrimination and aggravated arrangement of illegal immigration. The coordinator against human trafficking, who started at the Ministry of the Interior on 1 June 2014, has proposed the establishment of a separate coordination structure within the Government to combat human trafficking.

131. Some of the largest cities in Finland have drawn up specific instructions on the procedure when encountering a victim of human trafficking. Cooperation between different actors is important when assisting victims of human trafficking. The most important partner for municipalities is the system of assistance for victims of human trafficking at the Joutseno reception centre. The Assistance System at Joutseno has arranged training for municipalities in the identification of victims of human trafficking, in encountering them and in organization of assistance to them. Municipalities also cooperate with state authorities. Also parishes have in certain municipalities participated in assistance activities, and many NGOs are important cooperation partners for municipalities.

132. During the period between fall 2010 and winter 2015, approximately ten sexual exploitations related human trafficking cases reached prosecution and courts. Injured parties in these cases are female young adults from Estonia, Romania, Czech Republic and Finland. One case where the injured party was a Finnish citizen has advanced to the Supreme Court (KKO:2014:8).

133. The Office of the Prosecutor General regularly organizes human trafficking training for prosecutors. One of the central themes of the training is to acknowledge the perspective of the victim in criminal investigation and proceedings as well as psychological consequences of victimization. Prosecutors specialised in such cases are also offered training on sensitive interaction with victims in criminal proceedings. In the basic training of the police, *inter alia*, human trafficking offences are covered, aiming at increasing identification preparedness. Further training has been organized annually. Under the National Police Board there is a network of officers and trainers on the prevention of illegal immigration and human trafficking, which consists of representatives of police departments and national police units.

134. As the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman has the right to obtain information, notwithstanding secrecy provisions, from authorities, from producers of services and support for victims of human trafficking, and from any actors receiving state aid for activities to prevent human trafficking. If the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman finds that a case has considerable importance for the rights of a possible victim of human trafficking, the Ombudsman or an official of the Office of the Ombudsman may assist the possible victim to safeguard his/her rights or when needed, procure legal assistance for him/her. As the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman issues annually to the Government and once every four years to the Parliament a report on trafficking and related phenomena.

135. The National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings issued the latest report to the Parliament in September 2014. According to the Rapporteur, activities to combat human trafficking and the realization of the rights of victims of human trafficking have advanced in Finland during the last four years. The Rapporteur especially points out sexual exploitation related human trafficking, which is much more widespread than the measures taken.

(c) Political Rights

The Democracy Policy Report 2014

136. The first Government report on democracy policy was submitted to Parliament in the spring of 2014. Its objective is to strengthen sustained and systematic promotion of democracy and adherence to the implementation of a democracy policy on all levels. The report analyses the objectives of the pursued democracy policy and how these objectives have been realized as well as developments regarding participation possibilities and equal participation during the last ten years. In addition, the report contains guidelines for the objectives of the Governments democracy policy for the 2010s.

Development of Possibilities for Participation and Exercise of Influence among Immigrants

137. Political participation among persons with an immigrant background is still a challenge in Finland. The work to develop voting activity and means for online participation, attaches attention to the possibilities of special groups, such as young persons and immigrants, to participate and exert influence. The Democracy Ambassador Project, which was realized just before the municipal elections 2012, was a new method of the administration to cooperate with organizations to increase voting turnout. Approximately 300 persons participated in the training organized for immigrants in 2012. Some of the training events had party panels, where local parties introduced themselves, attracting large attendance. The training was organized by the Ministry of Justice and the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO). The nationwide training period of almost two months for the Democracy Ambassadors was realized in six municipalities. The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior have also trained 41 democracy ambassadors in the capital area through the iCount project, funded by the EU.

Reform of the Act on the Sámi Parliament

138. The Committee recommended that the State party enhance the decision-making powers of the Sámi Parliament (para. 11) and that, in defining who is eligible to vote for Members of the Sámi Parliament, the State party accord due weight to the rights of the Sámi people to self-determination (para. 12).

139. The Act on the Sámi Parliament (974/1995) was enacted in 1995 and it governs the cultural autonomy of the Sámi people. Since then, the Act has been amended several times to better correspond to practical needs. In 2012, the Ministry of Justice established a working group to prepare a proposal for the revision of the Act on the Sámi Parliament. The memorandum of the working group (OM 55/2013) states that the overall objective of the revision is to improve the operational preconditions of Sámi cultural autonomy and of the Sámi Parliament.

140. Based on the proposal of the working group, a Bill on the revision of the Act on the Sámi Parliament (Bill 167/2014) was introduced to the Parliament on 25 September 2014. The Bill contained, *inter alia*, provisions for the revision of the current definition of Sámi. The most important significance of the definition is that a Sámi person must be included in the electoral roll of persons entitled to vote in Sámi Parliament elections. After the committee reading of the Bill, it was clear that the Parliament would not approve the definition suggested in the Bill. Since the revision of the definition in the way proposed by the Government and by the Sámi Parliament was the most important part of the Bill, the preconditions for approval of the Bill were lost. The Government cancelled the Bill on 12 March 2015.

(d) Other civil rights

Rapid growth in the number of asylum seekers

141. During 2015 the number of asylum seekers has experienced a rapid growth. 30,000-35,000 asylum seekers are estimated to arrive in Finland this year. As of November 22, Finland had received 29,793 asylum seekers, 2,525 of which are under the age of 18 and travelling without guardians. The majority of the applicants (17,894) arrived during September and October. 26,545 applications are pending.

142. The number of asylum seekers in Finland has varied between 1,500 and 6,000 in the 2000's. In 2014, the number of asylum seekers was 3,651. The country of origin of the majority of asylum seekers to arrive in Finland during 2015 is Iraq (65%). The second and third largest groups are from Afghanistan (14%) and Somalia (6%). The fourth most common country of origin is Albania (2%) and the fifth Syria (2%). 11% are from other nationalities.

143. From the beginning of November, the police and the Finnish Immigration Service will adopt a common operating model in which a single authority will conduct both the initial hearing and the asylum interview at the same time. The Ministry of the Interior has set up a project to review the requirements for issuing residence permits on the basis of international protection. The aim is to bring the Finnish legislation in line with the general requirements laid down in EU legislation. The aim is to submit the government proposal to Parliament in January 2016. In September, the Ministry of the Interior also established a legislative project to review the family reunification criteria to comply with the EU Family Reunification Directive. The government proposal will be submitted to Parliament in spring 2016.

144. There are 121 reception units across the country, in which approximately 26,000 asylum seekers live. More than half of the reception units are now upheld by the Finnish Red Cross. In October, the Government accepted the Ministry of the Interior's proposal for emergency funding from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). As estimated by the Ministry of the Interior, the need for emergency funding in Finland will be 120 million euros in the 12 month period September 2015-August 2016.

Study on Alternatives to Detention

145. The Committee recommended that the State party employ alternatives to the detention of asylum seekers whenever possible and that asylum seekers not be detained in police facilities (para. 18).

146. Detention is already at present a last resort interim measure. The threshold for detention is high, especially when children are concerned. Amendments to the Aliens Act and to the Act on the Treatment of Aliens Placed in Detention and on Detention Units entered into force on 1 July 2015. Through the reform, detention of unaccompanied minor asylum seeking children under the age of 15 is prohibited. Unaccompanied children under the age of 15 may not be held in detention on any grounds. In addition, detention of unaccompanied children over 15 years has been limited to 72 hours, which may be extended with another 72 hours in exceptional circumstances. An unaccompanied asylum seeking child under the age of 15 may be held in detention only when the application for international protection has been denied and the decision on removal from the country has become enforceable after appeals.

Accelerated Asylum Procedure

147. The Committee recommended that the State party carefully examine its use of accelerated procedures in asylum cases (para. 18).

148. An amendment to the Aliens Act, entered into force on 1 July 2015, clarifies bans on enforcement of removals from the country. Henceforth, the applicant must file the request to ban the enforcement of the decision on removal from the country with the Administrative Court within a week from obtaining the decision, if it has been made pursuant to sections 95 b, 103 or 104 of the Aliens Act (cancellation of application for international protection, dismissing applications and applying an accelerated procedure). The Administrative Court shall decide in the matter within a week from receiving the request. The obligation of the police to wait for the decision of the Administrative Court before enforcing a removal from the country is laid down in the Act. This Amendment both clarifies current praxis and strengthens legal security. Short deadlines ensure effective proceedings.

Non-Discrimination Ombudsman as the Supervisor of Aliens Rights

149. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman is competent to supervise enforcements of removals from the country of foreigners in all their stages. The supervisory task was added to the Aliens Act and to the Act on the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the National Discrimination and Equality Tribunal on 30 December 2013 and the amendment entered into force on 1 January 2014. The task is based on the EU Return Directive, according to which Member States shall provide for an effective forced-return monitoring system. At request, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman shall be given information necessary for the supervision of removals from the country.

Legal Protection of Religious Freedom

150. The exercise of freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Freedom of Religion Act (453/2003). The Freedom of Religion Act contains provisions on, *inter alia*, registered religious communities, membership in such communities, membership and resignation procedures, and practices related to oaths and affirmations. A religious community means the Evangelical-Lutheran Church (75% of population are members), Orthodox Church (1% of population) and registered religious communities (1.5% of population).

151. Religion may also be exercised without belonging to a religious community. The number of persons not affiliated with religious communities was more than a million in 2010 and in 2013 1.2 million. Thus, one out of five Finns is not a member of any religious community registered in Finland. At the moment, there are approximately 90 registered religious communities. The spectrum of religious communities is relatively broad in Finland.

152. The Basic Education Act (628/1998) realizes the principle of freedom of religion guaranteed by the Constitution of Finland, and stresses that instruction of religion is first and foremost a right of the pupil and student, not for securing the interests of religious communities. Pupils in basic education have rather extensive rights to obtain education in their own religion and in ethics. Instruction of the pupils' own religion must be organized at schools with a minimum of three pupils belonging to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church or the Orthodox Church. Three or more pupils belonging to a religious community other than those referred to in subsection 2 shall be provided religious education in accordance with their own religion, if their parents/carers so request. A core curriculum has been drawn up for the following religions: Evangelical-Lutheran, Orthodox, Islam, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Adventist, Hare Krishna, Christ Community, Baha'i, Lord's People (Herran Kansa), Mormon, Evangelical Free Church of Finland and Pentecostal Church of Finland.

153. The General Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998, amended 455/2003) contains similar provisions.

154. According to the value base of the national core curriculum for basic education determined by the National Board of Education (22 December 2014), basic education is

independent from religions, views or political parties. In addition to the construction of the pupil's own world view and knowledge of his or her own religion, the objectives for teaching of religion and ethics focus more on knowledge of other religions and non-religious views, agnosticism and acceptance of diversity. The use of religious symbols or clothing is not limited in schools.

155. Practice of religion in the Metsälä detention unit has been raised in the legality supervision of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. In the decision (3101/4/13) the Deputy-Ombudsman welcomed the special arrangements of 2013 at Metsälä detention unit making it possible for Muslims to observe Ramadan, if they so wish.

(e) Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Study on the Realization of the Linguistic Rights of the Roma

156. The Committee encouraged to reinforce measures for inclusion of Roma children in education and to promote the teaching of the Romani language (para. 15).

157. The education policy of Finland is inclusive, and pupils needing special support will get that support in their own class, not in special classes or special schools.

158. The Ministry of Justice published in 2014 a study on the realization of the linguistic rights, protected by the Constitution of Finland, of the Roma. The study was based on the Finnish Roma Policy Programme, the national Action Plan on fundamental and human rights 2012-2013 as well as the Government's Programme.

159. The number of students receiving instruction in the Romani language has increased. Also Romani language-nest activities have increased in recent years. Introduction of university level education of Romani language and culture has been an important step, since it enables graduation of qualified teachers of Romani in the future. Current arrangements make it possible to study to become a Romani language teacher. However, it is challenging to recruit Roma to study at a university, which compounds access to Romani teachers with a Roma background. The lack of competent teachers of Romani language is one of the most important reasons that Roma children are not receiving instruction of Romani language.

160. According to the study, the linguistic rights of the Roma have been taken into account in the legislation as provided in the Constitution of Finland. However, implementation of the current provisions on the Romani language is partly ineffective, and the rights set down in the legislation are not realized in practice. A state grant system is in place for the teaching of the Romani language. Municipalities should be encouraged to use this possibility. In addition, also awareness among Roma parents should be increased on the right to obtain instruction of the Romani language.

161. There has been very little information on the education situation of Roma adults. The Finnish National Board of Education is currently working on a study on this topic.

Programme for the Revival of the Sámi languages

162. The Committee recommended an accelerated realization of the programme for the revival of the Sámi languages (para. 14).

163. In recent years, several measures have been taken to revive the Sámi languages, but the measures do not yet guarantee their survival. The situation of all three Sámi languages spoken in Finland is still endangered. Skolt Sámi and Inari Sámi are critically endangered languages. Challenges for the revival of the Sámi languages include securing adequate day-care provided in Sámi languages and teaching of and in Sámi languages, emigration of the Sámi from the homeland, leading to a decrease in natural environments for using these

languages, and lack of qualified professionals from different fields with adequate skills in the Sámi languages.

164. By a decision in principle, the Government decided in July 2014 on an action plan for the revival of the Sámi languages. The Action Plan contains a vision on the revival of the Sámi languages by 2025 as well as measures to improve the situation. The Sámi Parliament was represented both in the working group preparing the draft and in its secretariat. The Action Plan concerns all three Sámi languages spoken in Finland: Northern, Inari and Skolt Sámi. Besides general sections, the decision in principle contains 21 specific measures for the revival of the Sámi language. The Ministry of Culture and Education is responsible for the monitoring of the realization of the Action Plan. The implementation of some of the measures has started well. Others have not started yet.

165. Language nests are childcare units where everything takes place only in Sámi. The activities are realized by organizing day-care or open early education activities in Sámi for children under school age and afternoon activities for school children using language immersion methods. At the moment, there are seven language nests in the Sámi homeland, run with the support of a special allocation. There are also language nests outside the Sámi homeland in Helsinki, Oulu and Rovaniemi. In 2015, the Ministry of Education and Culture supports these language nests through the Sámi Parliament by an allocation of €550,000.

Education in Sámi Languages

166. The Committee recommended appropriate measures to ensure that all Sámi children effectively receive education in their own languages, including by training more teachers in Sámi languages (para. 14).

167. Students with knowledge of Sámi who live in the Sámi homeland have the right to basic education in their own language. Upper secondary schools and vocational schools may use Sámi languages as the teaching language. Sámi languages may also be studied as optional languages. State aid is granted from the state budget for costs of instruction of Sámi languages in the Sámi homeland. The subsidy fully covers the costs of the instruction.

168. The linguistic rights of the Sámi in basic education are best realized in instruction given in the Sámi homeland. A proof of successful efforts to revive the language is the increased number students of Inari Sámi: the number of students has grown steadily since the 1990s, when there were no students of Inari Sámi. During the school year 2014-2015, 54 pupils received instruction in Inari Sámi. However, the situation of the education is still endangered, and there is a constant lack of qualified teachers and study materials. There are 22 pupils receiving instruction in Skolt Sámi and they have two language lessons a week. Twelve of the students also study orthodox religion, music and art in the Skolt Sámi language.

169. The number of pupils in Sámi language instruction has been almost the same in the 2000s. During the academic year 2014-2015 there were 175 pupils in Sámi instruction, out of which 14 Inari Sámi and 12 Skolt Sámi and the rest Northern Sámi. Sámi is studied as an optional language (2 lessons a week) by 344 students. There are a total of 540 students of the Sámi language. In addition, 30 persons study Sámi outside the homeland.

170. Challenges of Sámi language studies are lack of qualified teachers and of study materials of good quality based on their own culture. The scarcity of teachers has increased in recent years. The situation is especially alarming regarding Inari and Skolt Sámi.

171. Municipalities of the homeland provided 33,000 lessons of instruction of Sámi languages in 2014. The amount of instruction has increased each year. Instruction of all Sámi languages diminishes as students advance to higher grades. Only the Sámi upper secondary school in Utsjoki teaches subjects in Northern Sámi.

172. A Decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture (1777/2009) provides for teaching of Sámi languages outside the homeland. In 2010, the Ministry lowered the minimum required number of students in a class as a prerequisite to obtain state subsidies from four to two students. Providers of education outside the homeland do not have a legal obligation to organize instruction of Sámi languages.

173. All Sámi languages may be taken as the mother-tongue exam in the Finnish Matriculation Examination. Northern Sámi, Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi may be taken as a foreign language. The possibility to take the Matriculation Examination in a Sámi language would be very important for Sámi language education as a whole. In 2010, the Ombudsman for Minorities and in April 2014, the Sámi Parliament made an initiative to this effect to the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Matriculation Examination Board is analysing the matter.

174. In vocational training a student may take a Sámi language as mother tongue. The Sámi Education Institute — *Sámi oahpahusguovddáš* — is the only vocational institute in Finland where also Sámi is used as the language of instruction. It has developed online pedagogics in Sámi languages and technical solutions for virtual instruction since 2004 and can be seen as a pioneer in this field, even nationally.

175. It is possible to study Sámi languages and culture at three Finnish universities: the Universities of Oulu, Helsinki and Lapland. The *Giellagas* Institute of the University of Oulu has a nationwide special task to provide tertiary education of and research in Sámi languages and culture. The Sámi University in Kautokeino, Norway, *Sámi allaskuvla*, is the only University in the Nordic Countries where the main language of instruction, research and administration is Sámi.

176. An allocation is reserved in the state budget for support of study materials in Sámi languages. The support has increased considerably in recent years. In 2013, the allocation was €290,000 and in 2015, €500,000.

177. Pursuant to the Act on Day-care for Children the municipality must ensure that day-care for children can be provided in the mother-tongue of the child in Finnish, Swedish and Sámi. An allocation of 120,000 euro is granted from the state budget for early childhood education provided in the Sámi languages in the Sámi homeland.

Health and Social Care Services in Sámi Languages

178. The Committee recommended that the State party ensure social and health services in Sámi languages to Sámi people in their homeland (para. 14).

179. In September 2013, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Sámi Parliament organized a seminar in Inari on health and social care services provided in the Sámi languages. The seminar presented a study on the well-being and health of the Sámi, carried out by the University of Lapland and financed by the Ministry. The findings indicate that the Sámi are considerably less happy with the health and social care services than the original population. According to the study (n=118) only 28% were happy with social services and 55% were happy with health care services.

180. During the project to develop the structures of health and social care for the Sámi (SaKaste), the knowledge of Sámi languages and culture was strengthened health and social care personnel. Procedures and tools for the use of the personnel have been developed especially in early education and geriatric services. The toolkit for geriatric services is an electronic guide and instruction "*How will I act when the client is a Sámi elderly person?*". Each municipality will add chapters to the guidebook on special cultural features of their own.

181. Since 2002, a separate annual State subsidy has been allocated from the state budget to secure availability of health and social care services in Sámi languages in the Sámi homeland. In 2015, the allocation is €480,000. The subsidy is allocated for costs of health and social care services produced in all Sámi languages.

182. It is primarily the municipalities that are responsible for service production in Sámi languages. Some services are also produced by organizations through outsourcing. However, there are still not enough health and social care services in Sámi languages, and bilingual professionals are not always available or their knowledge of Sámi languages is inadequate. There is a lack of materials in Inari and Skolt Sámi. The most important challenge of the future is to produce services for the elderly in the Sámi languages. Also Sámi families with children need support to cope with challenges related to parenthood and everyday life. There are also shortcomings with regard to services for persons with mental health and substance abuse issues.

183. In February 2015 a border cooperation seminar on Sámi issues was held in Inari organized by the Regional State Administrative Agency for Northern Finland, the Sámi Parliament and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Issues related to the quality and availability of services in Sámi languages and cooperation between Norway and Finland were discussed.

Study on Discrimination Experienced in Health and Social Care Services by Elderly Persons Belonging to Minorities

184. The Study on discrimination experienced in health and social care services by elderly persons belonging to minorities was published in 2014 as part of the implementation of the discrimination monitoring system. The study analyses discrimination from two perspectives: the extent to which discrimination becomes known to the authorities and the kind of discrimination and discrimination experiences that elderly persons have.

185. The study revealed that it is very difficult to investigate multiple discrimination on the basis of official data. Complaints on discrimination in health and social services could be filed only on ethnic grounds to the Ombudsman for Minorities (as of 1 January the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and on all discrimination grounds) and the Discrimination Tribunal (now the Discrimination and Equality Tribunal). Otherwise, the complaint channel was to file an administrative complaint to the Regional State Administrative Agency. Discrimination is not an issue that manifests itself in administrative complaints. The age of the complainant is not registered systematically by any authority such that it would be possible to extract age-based information. Belonging to a minority group is only revealed if it essentially pertains to the service that the complaint concerns, e.g. service for persons with disabilities.

186. According to the study, elderly persons belonging to minorities, such as the elderly in general, seldom complain about discrimination that they have encountered. However, the findings revealed numerous discrimination experiences. Most often the discrimination was indirect or structural. The lack of attention paid to cultural issues was mentioned by many groups. These experiences of discrimination among the elderly did not fulfil the legal definition of discrimination.

Health Care Services for Paperless Persons

187. The Finnish legislation guarantees emergency care for all. Pursuant to the Health Care Act, paperless persons have the right to emergency care within the public health care system. Emergency care also comprises emergency dental care, mental health care, and care for substance abusers and psycho-social support. Paperless persons should pay for the real costs of the care they receive. The State pays the costs of the care through Kela to the health

care unit, if the costs cannot be collected from the person him/herself. In addition to public services, paperless persons have access to health care services provided as charity.

188. At the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the National Institute for Health and Welfare carried out a study on health care services for paperless persons in Finland. According to the study, approximately 1,000-1,500 persons stay in Finland who from the point of view of health care have the status of paperless persons. Persons staying in Finland from outside the EU, EEA and Switzerland without permits are paperless. Also EU citizens belong to this group when they do not have a health insurance in their home country. In general, paperless persons are under the age of 50.

189. According to the study, health care services for paperless persons are not realized in an appropriate manner currently in Finland, and could be improved by securing 1) possibilities to use health care services to the same extent as persons with a municipality of residence in Finland or 2) the same level of services as for asylum seekers or 3) emergency care in accordance with the current legislation complemented with health care for children under 18, pregnant and postpartum women.

190. The Government Bill on the obligation of municipalities to organise certain health care services for certain foreigners, and on the amendment of the Act on Cross-Border Health Care (Bill 343/2014) was introduced to the Parliament on 18 December 2014. The Bill expired because of the end of the parliamentary season.

191. Since 2012, the Refugee Advice Centre runs a pioneer project supported by RAY to organize information dissemination, data collection and legal advice for paperless persons.

Study on the Health and Well-Being of Persons with a Russian, Somali or Kurdish Background

192. In 2012, the National Institute for Health and Welfare published a comprehensive study on the health and well-being of 1,000 persons aged 18-64 from six cities with a Russian, Somali or Kurdish background. A third of persons with a Russian or Kurdish background have experienced that they are treated less politely than others. Persons with a Somali background experienced impoliteness more seldom (21%). Persons with a Russian or Somali background experienced approximately as often that they are treated less respectfully than others (approximately 23-24%). Approximately 7% of persons with a Russian or Somali background were subject to constant discrimination.

193. The study revealed that experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment are more common on the street (23-32%) and in stores (11%). Discrimination is also experienced in interactions with the police, especially those with a Somali background experience such discrimination (15%). The housing application process is also seen as discriminatory (8-13%). Experiences of discrimination within health and social care are less frequent (4-10%).

194. The National Institute for Health and Welfare has developed a monitoring system, which may be used to monitor the health and well-being of immigrants in the future.

Action Plan for the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation of Girls and Women

195. In August 2012, an Action Plan for the period 2012-2016 on the Prevention of Circumcision (FGM) of Girls and Women was published. All forms of FGM of girls may be deemed to fulfil the criteria for assault, why FGM is a punishable act according to the Criminal Code. In addition to the perpetrator also other participants, such as the instigator, are criminally responsible. There is no separate Act on the prohibition of FGM in Finland. All professionals working with children are obliged to file a child welfare report to the social welfare authorities, if suspicions of FGM arise. Municipalities with a large

immigrant population are recommended to elaborate detailed plans for preventive work locally.

196. The National Institute for Health and Welfare has published an information package on its website for the prevention of FGM. The National Institute for Health and Welfare has also issued instruction on prevention of FGM for health care professionals and organized training in different parts of Finland.

Non-Medical Circumcision of Boys

197. There is no legislation in Finland permitting or prohibiting non-medical circumcision of boys. In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled that religious circumcision is not a crime if it is performed properly. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has found out that approximately 400 religious circumcisions of boys are performed every year in Finland. However, charges have been pressed for assault, and cases have been taken to court when complications have arisen.

198. In the beginning of 2015, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health issued a new instruction on non-medical circumcision of boys. According to the instruction, non-medical circumcisions may be performed on boys under 18 years under certain conditions. The objective of the instruction is to ensure that the measure is performed under secure circumstances. Only a certificated doctor may perform circumcisions.

Report of a Study on Discrimination on the Finnish Labour Market

199. In 2012, a report of the University of Helsinki was published analysing manifestations of discrimination in Finnish working life, based on existing research data. The report presents the first field experiment in Finland where situational test methods were used. The test applicants who were women and men with Finnish and Russian names, applied for a total of 1,200 vacant jobs at the end of 2011. The findings indicate that applicants with a Russian name had to send twice as many applications compared to applicants with a Finnish name in order to be invited to an interview.

200. After the publication of the study report, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of the Interior commissioned a study for the creation of a model for long-term monitoring of discrimination in work-life in Finland as well as a first study realized according to the model in 2014.

Improvement of the Labour Market Situation of Immigrant Women

201. The Government integration programme stresses that all immigrant women shall have access to integration promotion services, even though these women would not immediately enter work-life, but instead take care of their children at home during several years. This requires that the service system is developed and that services are offered actively. The Integration Act (1386/2010) provides that all immigrants have, *inter alia*, the right to information on the Finnish society and to guidance and tutoring. The municipality may also elaborate an integration plan for families, which can include education, peer support or activities in organisations suitable for stay-at-home mothers who take care of their children.

202. The development programme Valtava of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy used a tutoring model for immigrant women *Women's School*. It was intended for immigrant women who are difficult to integrate in work-life and who risk social exclusion. In Women's Schools immigrant women obtain knowledge and skills that a full participation in the Finnish society require. Through work activities immigrant women created contacts with Finnish persons and created new networks. On the other hand, workplace tutors in

companies learn to encounter employees with an immigrant background and get information on other cultures.

203. The project *Pätkät Pitkiksi* (literally "from short to long") of the Valtava Gender Mainstreaming Development Programme was a service where a personal employment coach was used to take active steps away from unemployment. The employment coach introduced the client to entrepreneurs through a letter. Thus the client's knowledge and skills were stressed, not gender, age or other background factors. This model considerably lowered the threshold to employ an employee.

Housing of Successful Asylum Applicants

204. The Committee also recommended that the national Government provide adequate funding to municipalities for the provision of housing to successful asylum applicants (para. 18).

205. Cf. the reply on immigrant housing in paragraphs 93-95.

Article 6

Legal Remedies in Discrimination Matters

206. Two special authorities have been established to monitor ethnic discrimination, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Discrimination and Equality Tribunal. The Equality Ombudsman supervises the prohibition on gender-based discrimination in all fields of life. The occupational safety and health units of the Regional State Administrative Agencies monitor discrimination in working life on all discrimination grounds pursuant to the Employment Contracts Act and the Non-Discrimination Act. However, the discrimination grounds enumerated in the Employment Contracts Act were moved to the Non-Discrimination Act as of 1 January 2015 (1325/2014). The Employment Contracts Act now only has a provision on the obligation of employers to treat employees equally.

207. The Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice supervise that authorities apply the law and promote the realization of fundamental and human rights. Data collection and reporting on discrimination vary between the different occupational safety and health unit of the Regional State Administrative Agencies.

208. The table below contains discrimination cases reported to the occupational safety and health unit of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southern Finland during 2011-2013, according to experienced discrimination grounds. The information is based on the report dated 4 April 2014 of the occupational safety and health unit of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southern Finland *"Client-initiated oversight of work discrimination in 2013"*.

	2011	*2012*	*2013*
Medical condition	69	80	96
Gender related	15	36	27
Union or other professional activity	13	15	17
Age	6	11	10
Nationality / ethnic origin	21	18	36
Religion	3	0	2
Sexual orientation	0	0	1
Family relations	6	1	0
Disability	0	3	1
Conviction, opinion	2	0	1

209. The occupational safety and health unit of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Western and Inland Finland has reported that there were 54 instances of client-initiated discrimination cases from November 2011 to March 2015. Five of them were discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin, and the rest on other discrimination grounds. There were e.g. 20 initiatives on health based discrimination, six on age and nine initiatives on opinion or union activities. Simultaneously, 19 cases were heard in district courts in the region of the unit. In 12 of these cases the offence was extortionate work discrimination (and/or human trafficking) based on ethnic origin/nationality. The offence was regular work discrimination in seven of the cases, three of them based on ethnic origin/nationality.

210. The occupational safety and health unit of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southwestern Finland reported having handled 26 discrimination cases from November 2011 to March 2015. Simultaneously, six cases were heard in district courts. More detailed information is unavailable.

211. The occupational safety and health unit of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Northern Finland reported having handled 45 discrimination cases from November 2011 to March 2015. Simultaneously, four cases were heard in district courts in the region. More detailed information is unavailable.

212. The occupational safety and health unit of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Eastern Finland reported having handled 46 discrimination cases during 2012-2014. In eight cases the discrimination grounds were race and/or nationality. In district courts of the region 18 discrimination cases were heard from 2012 to March 2015.

213. The research report *Riiteleminen on pienelle ihmiselle raskasta* (literally "it is hard to fight when you are little") analysed discrimination cases in different levels of court.

214. A total of 643 client cases became pending at the Office of the Ombudsman for Minorities in 2012, 219 of them concerned discrimination. Correspondingly in 2013, 723 cases became pending, 285 discrimination cases and in 2014 there were 782 pending cases, 289 discrimination cases.

Article 7

(a) Education and Training

Human Rights in School Curricula

215. The National Board of Education approved core curricula for preschool and basic education in December 2014. Local curricula based on this core curriculum will be adopted in preschool and grades 1-6 during 2016 and in grades 7-9 gradually during 2017-2019.

216. Basic education promotes well-being, democracy and active participation in civic society. Basic education provides information on gender diversity, challenges stereotypes and encourages school and career choices based on interest, not gender-based notions. According to the value basis of basic education, cultural diversity is seen as an asset. Equality and a non-discrimination are guiding principles of the development of basic education. Education on its part promotes economic, social, regional and gender equality. The education does not tie pupils to any religion, world view or political party. Schools and education may not be used as a channel for commercial influencing.

217. The current core curriculum for upper secondary education (youth) was determined in 2003, and adopted at latest in 2005. The core curriculum for upper secondary education (adults) is from 2004. The National Board of Education monitors the launching and functioning of new curricula. *Inter alia*, the core curriculum for upper secondary education was complemented with regard to human rights and the holocaust in 2010. New general

nationwide objectives for upper secondary education and distribution of lessons as well as a new core curriculum for upper secondary education to be renewed will be taken into use on 1 August 2016.

Study on the Realization of Human Rights Education and Training

218. The Human Rights Centre realized in 2013 a study on the realization of human rights education and training in the Finnish education system. The study was published in February 2014. It is the first actual study in Finland on the quality, quantity and reach of human rights training. Recommendations approved by the Human Rights Delegation for the development of human rights education and training were also published in together with the study. The Human Rights Delegation recommended, *inter alia*, that an Action Plan be drafted on human rights education and training, and that human rights knowledge among teachers and educators be strengthened.

Study on the Realization of the Human Rights Objectives of Teacher Training

219. In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Culture commissioned a study to analyse the realization of objectives related to democracy and human rights and how these topics are covered in teacher training at universities and schools of vocational teacher education. The objective of the study was, *inter alia*, to produce recommendations for the development of teaching of and studies in democracy and human rights issues within teacher training and in practical training.

220. Based on hearings with different parties of teacher training and on an analysis of curricula it is evident that democracy and human rights are seen as important value principles for the education in all units. They are also part of the operative culture. Different study modules contain very little studies that directly deal with democracy and human rights. However, in most of the units, these topics are covered in many contexts, e.g. through philosophical/sociological modules of pedagogics and in multicultural studies. Universities and professional teacher training institutes develop their curricula autonomously. In particular, human rights actors view this as an obstacle to making human rights issues a visible part of teacher training.

221. The authors of the study recommended, *inter alia*, that human rights issues, democracy and participation should be made a more visible and comprehensive part of the training. Teacher students not only need knowledge but also practical skills and experiences that enable respect for human rights and participation in teaching. This requires support for professional development of teacher trainers as well as networking and cooperation. Allocation of resources for research in democracy and human rights education is especially important.

Study Materials

222. The Ministry of the Interior has coordinated the drafting of study materials and a teacher's guide on the Roma for distribution to and utilization of the upper stage of basic education. The materials are found on the Roma portal and cover the history and cultural traditions of the Roma, modern life, especially from the point of view of youth, as well as beliefs and prejudice towards the Roma.

223. The Ministry of the Interior has together with the Sámi Parliament prepared materials for the upper stage of basic education on Sámi history, culture and rights as an indigenous people. Groups representing Sámi youth have participated in the work. The materials named *Oktavuohta* is in the form of a web magazine.

Bullying of Minority Children in Schools

224. The Committee recommended that the State party continue to strengthen its efforts to protect Roma children and immigrant children from bullying in schools (para. 17).

225. The programme KiVa Koulu® is an ensemble of measures for the prevention and reduction of bullying in schools developed at the University of Turku and funded by the Ministry of Education. The programme leans strongly on research and is a Finnish social innovation. KiVa Koulu® is meant to be used in basic education schools. KiVa Koulu® has been regularized nationwide in schools since autumn 2009. School personnel is given information on bullying and how to intervene. The whole school community commits itself to the work to combat bullying. According to research, 5-10% of pupils at Finnish schools face continuous bullying. The numbers have not been reduced during the last ten years. Approximately 2,500 schools in Finland are registered users of KiVa Koulu®. Quality recommendations have been developed for schools implementing the programme, facilitating monitoring of the realization of the programme.

226. The National study commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior *Who does not belong? Discrimination experienced by children and youth in Finland* (Publication of the Ministry of the Interior 36/2010, in Finnish) establishes that discrimination experienced by children and youth in everyday life are quite common. Experiences of Roma children have been gleaned, *inter alia*, in the publication of the Ombudsman for Children *More the same than different*.

227. According to the study, discrimination is most frequent in schools. Immigrant respondents stood out in the study regarding prevalence of experiences of prejudice: almost a third of these youth told of experienced prejudice. According to the study, 65% of immigrant children and youth had experienced name-calling at school. The study also concluded that most of the bullying experiences of children and youth belonging to minority groups probably constitute harassment pursuant to the Non-discrimination Act.

228. According to the newest School Health Survey, immigrant youth are bullied more often than others, and they also experience violence or threats thereof more often. On the basis of the replies in the youth barometer, youth belonging to different ethnic groups have been analysed. Children of mixed marriages (53%) and Finnish speaking youth of the original population (44%) most often report experiences of discrimination at school. 38% of immigrant youth report experiences of discrimination at school and Swedish speaking youth of the original population only 16%. Experiences of discrimination stand out among girls/women from multinational marriages and in the case of girls/women of the Finnish-speaking original population.

229. Restorative mediation Verso provides an alternative way to solve conflicts among students and between students and teachers in everyday life at schools. The mediation has a clear operative model, by which members of the personnel of the school and pupils that have obtained training for the task, help parties to find a solution to their conflict.

Fundamental and Human Rights Training of the Police

230. The police is given training on how hate motives are recorded and taken into account in criminal investigation, *inter alia*, through internal instructions. Hate motive means in addition to a racist motive also sexual orientation, disability, religion or conviction as motive for an offence. An instruction of the National Police Board "*Classification of suspected hate crimes or offences with features thereof in the information system of police affairs*" entered into force in 2012. The objective of the instruction is to enable filtering from the information system for closer analysis such offences that a party or the police consider being a possible hate crime.

231. In the professional basic, continuation and in-service training of the police attention is given to increasing tolerance within the police. Fundamental and human rights are covered both in the basic education of the police (Bachelor of Policing) and in advanced studies (Master of Policing). The training has been realized both through specific classes and through mainstreaming, where promotion of non-discrimination, tolerance, cultural sensitivity and an ethical working method are covered in all possible educational situations. General competencies of the police degrees include ethical and internationality skills aiming at supporting the capacity of the police to take into account the perspectives of the individual and society as well as differences between cultures.

232. The Bachelors Degree of the police also includes instruction on encountering foreigners and foreign cultures, identification of hate crime and on professional ethics of the police in several subjects. Issues related to hate crimes are integrated in a functional way in the subject matter of different study modules. In order to promote tolerance and increase knowledge of multiculturalism, trainers who represent minority groups are used when possible. After taking the Bachelor Degree all police officers (in office) give the police ethical oath. In the oath, a pledge is given to respect the dignity and rights of all persons.

233. Also the Master of Policing Studies programme covers issues related to hate crimes and human rights in an integrated manner in the contents different study modules. Also within further and in-service training of the police, several training events are organized each year covering, *inter alia*, issues related to fundamental and human rights and ethical policing. Training that strengthens the knowledge of different cultures and religions has been organized so that the police may take into account special needs of especially vulnerable groups. The themes of the two-day annual seminar "The Police and Human Rights" include, *inter alia*, prevention of racism and fundamental and human rights, ethical policing and hate crimes and discrimination. In addition to nationwide training, training to increase tolerance among the police is also organized locally. The police participates e.g. in the *Good Practice Plus* Project, aiming at, *inter alia*, increase skills of the police to identify hate crimes and to promote creation and maintenance of good relations especially with Muslim communities.

234. The annual study on hate crimes and dissemination of information of its findings increase awareness among different actors of society on the legislation on racism and xenophobia. The police has since 1997 compiled a study on offences known to the police with a racist motive. Since 2008, the study has also covered sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, religion and world view as motives for hate crimes. The police interferes with a low threshold in hate crimes and investigates them without delay when possible. The cooperation with different authorities and organizations has continued. The National Police Board as established a "Cooperation Forum of the Police and Ethnic Communities", with representatives of ethnic communities, NGOs and authorities. The objective of the Forum is to increase dialogue between the police and ethnic communities. Community police activities also increase cooperation with minority groups and make the police more approachable. The police also monitor the activities of persons belonging to extremist groups.

Fundamental and Human Rights Training within the Justice Administration

235. The training unit of the Judicial Administration Department of the Ministry of Justice annually produces approximately 230-33 training days for the development of expertise of the judicial administration personnel. In 2014, a total of 2,827 persons participated in the training events produced by the training unit. The number of events produced was approximately 130, amounting to 245 training days. The training is intended for the personnel of general and administrative courts, legal aid and trusteeship personnel,

personnel of special tribunals as well as for the Consumer Disputes Board. Depending on the topic, also representatives of interest groups may participate in the training. The training for judges is divided according to topics for judges of general courts and for judges of administrative and special courts/tribunals. Part of the training is also realized as joint trainings for both general and administrative courts.

236. Joint training covers, *inter alia*, EU-law and fundamental and human rights law. Training events covering fundamental and human rights, delay judgements of the European Court of Human Rights and principles of fair trial are annually attended by approximately 400-500 judges. In 2014, approximately 510 judges from general and administrative courts participated in training events with aforementioned topics.

(b) Culture

Access to Art and Culture

237. A working group appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture discussed promotion of access to art and culture. The four-year term of the working group ended in January 2013. Access to art and culture services has advanced and the measures taken have been seen as useful, but obstacles are still encountered in all areas of access. The working group proposes several measures in its final report to uphold and develop mother-tongue and culture as well as to promote accessibility and diversity of art and culture. Representation of special and minority groups in decision-making processes concerning these groups and in decision-making organs in the area of art and culture should be promoted. Grant systems should be developed to better support artists from special and minority groups.

Study on Roma Participation in Cultural Activities

238. The Finnish League for Human Rights published in 2012 a study financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture on Roma participation in cultural activities in Finland. A comprehensive survey was made for the study, mapping utilization of cultural services among Roma over the age of 15 years living in Finland. The study indicates that the Roma culture is at a turning point. The changes are scary to most respondents, because the generations seem to be growing more distant to one another, the community is disappearing and the traditions have changed and become more difficult to adhere to. The Romani language was seen as having a key role for Roma culture, but the respondents wanted to reserve its teaching as an internal issue of the Roma. The respondents hoped that Roma culture would be made more known in cultural institutions of the original population and that cultural centres be established to maintain Roma culture. Very few of the respondents thought that the use of traditional Roma clothing or a Roma appearance constituted an obstacle for using cultural services.

Study on the Participation of Russian Speakers in Cultural Activities

239. The study of the Institute for Russia and Eastern Europe on Russian speakers of Finland as users and producers of cultural services was published in 2012. According to the study, obstacles to participation in art and culture for Russian speakers living in Finland are the result of attitudes on both sides — the Russian speakers and the service producers. Russian speakers tend to isolate themselves inside their own cultural group and only use art and culture provided in their own language. The reason for this may be that the own culture is seen as having more traditions and higher standard or because the own cultural group is experienced to alleviate possible discrimination experiences. Finnish art and culture services are not always willing enough to tailor their services for Russian speakers. According to the Finnish Association of Russian-Speaking Organizations, Russian speakers

would like to participate more closely in cultural activities provided by Finns, even though language constitutes an obstacle for some groups. As for literature, the supply of literature in Russian is on a quite good level. There is demand for more theatre in Russian, especially for children.

240. The Ministry of Education and Culture is financing the *Cultura Foundation*, established in 2013, which according to its rules shall develop and strengthen the linguistic identity of the Russian speaking population in Finland and promote development of culture in Russian and otherwise develop two-way and multi-sectoral integration.

State Subsidies for Support of Multiculturalism

241. The Ministry of Education and Culture annually grants state aid for the support of multiculturalism and the work to combat racism, for promotion of integration of immigrants through art and culture as well as for non-discrimination work within sports. Grants to support multiculturalism are meant for support of national minorities own cultural activities. A separate allocation is reserved for support of Sámi culture and for activities of Sámi NGOs, which is distributed through the Sámi Parliament.

242. Subsidies for work to combat racism are granted for activities and projects of organizations to combat racism and xenophobia and to promote dialogue among cultures. In 2014, support was granted to a total of €612,000.

243. The Art Promotion Centre Finland started its activities in 2013 and it distributes each year grants for multicultural projects and international activities. The objective of grants for projects promoting and supporting multiculturalism is to strengthen possibilities for artists with an immigrant background or belonging to national minorities to pursue artistic activities and to participate in Finnish art life without discrimination.

244. The Ministry of Education and Culture supports non-discrimination projects within sports. The support is linked to the development programme of the Ministry on integration of immigrants through sports. The measures will be implemented during the period 2011-2015. The evaluation of the programme for integrating immigrants through sports was finalized in 2014. A study on immigrants' own sports activities was finalized in 2013. In 2012 a study was published with support from the Ministry as part of the YES 4 project on discrimination experiences of youth and on obstacles for participation in civic activities within sports.

245. The objective of the new Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity, which entered into force in May 2015, is to further strengthen equality and non-discrimination in sports and to promote possibilities for different demographic groups to engage in physical activity. Gender equality, non-discrimination and multiculturalism are mentioned as the starting points of the Act. Sports organizations obtaining state aid are required to draw up an equality and non-discrimination plan as of 2016. The Ministry of Education and Culture has together with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice supported the creation of a non-discrimination databank of sports organizations on the website of the organisation Valo within the framework of the YES 7 project. The cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Culture and NGOs continues, *inter alia*, in the areas of non-discrimination training and information.

246. The Ministry of Education and Culture has prepared a development strategy for the Government's cultural policy until 2020. It aims at steering the own activities of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the area of cultural politics. One of the objectives of the strategy is to strengthen the status of the Sámi culture as an indigenous culture by supporting the Sámi Cultural Centre and new creative production emanating from the Sámi tradition.

247. The Ministry of Education and Culture has continued to support Roma organizations and civic activity projects related to the Roma by means of art/culture and youth allocations aiming at strengthening active citizenship and non-discrimination of the Roma. The survival and development of the Romani language is supported by granting aid for Roma language nests and for instruction of Roma as mother tongue in basic education and upper secondary education.

248. In January 2013, the municipal library of Espoo opened a Russian library, serving Russian speakers and others interested in the Russian language. The objective of the library is to support the language and culture of the Russian speaking population resident in Finland, as well as to disseminate information on the Russian culture and society to the interested public.

249. The Karelian Language Society has launched a cultural centre for children and youth, which at first focuses on the production of books and records and establishing clubs. In the next phases there will be production of, *inter alia*, club materials, miniature plays, short films, role games, board games and computer games. Joint camps and cultural events will be organised with Russian Karelians.

(c) Information

250. A prerequisite for a well-functioning democracy is independent and free media. In accordance with the policies laid down in the Government's Democracy Policy Report, the Government endeavours to promote public debate on democracy and active dialogue among different actors, including the media. In the annual freedom of press index 2015 issued by Reporters without Borders, Finland ranked first.

Media and Publishing in Minority Languages

251. The mission of Yleisradio (Finnish Broadcasting Company, Yle), is to make varied and comprehensive public television and radio programmes with supplementary services available for everybody on equal terms. Yle's activities are governed by the Act on Yleisradio Oy, which contains policy guidelines and special tasks for Yle's public service programming. The public service shall in its programming, *inter alia*, treat the Finnish and Swedish speaking population equally, produce services in Sámi, Romani and sign language and, as applicable, also in languages of other linguistic groups of the country, support tolerance and multiculturalism, see to programmes for minority and special groups as well as promote interaction between cultures and maintain a supply of programmes meant for international use. The activities of Yle are financed by a Yle tax.

252. Svenska Yle is responsible for services in Swedish. Yle Sápmi, as the only channel in Finland, produces news, magazine programmes, children's programmes and devotional programmes for the Sámi in all three Sámi languages: Northern, Skolt and Inari Sámi. Yle also broadcasts news in sign language, Romani, Russian and English and as the only public broadcast company in the world, in Latin.

253. The Government Decree on Press Support (389/2008) provides for support for promotion of publishing of newspapers and online newspapers in Swedish, Sámi, Karelian, Romani and sign language. Aid may also be granted for production of news services in Swedish, for production and publication of material in Sámi languages in connection with the publication of a newspaper in Finnish or Swedish. The objective was thus to promote freedom of speech and diversity of communications.

254. The Decree on Support for Newspapers, amended by the Government (538/2011), entered into force on 1 January 2013. After the reform, press support may also be granted to online publications in Karelian, or for supplements in Karelian published with a newspaper in Finnish or Swedish. In 2015, the Government decided to grant €500,000 to support the

publishing newspapers and online newspaper in minority languages. Support was granted to *Nyhetsbyrån FNB Ab* (Swedish), *Lapin Kansa* (Sámi) ja *Karjalan kielen seura ry* (Karelian).

III. Other recommendations of the Committee

A. International convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families

255. In 1992, 2004 and 2011, the Government analysed prerequisites for ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Based on the consultations, it was concluded that the ratification of the Convention was not expedient. The Finnish legislation does not differentiate between migrant workers and other immigrants. They are protected by the same constitutional rights and human rights conventions ratified by Finland as all other immigrants.

B. ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples

256. The Committee recommended that the State party find an adequate negotiated solution to the dispute regarding the rights of Sámi people in their traditional lands, and in doing so, take into account ILO Convention No. 169, and take appropriate measures to protect the Sámi traditional livelihood of reindeer husbandry (para. 13).

257. The Government Bill (264/2014) on the approval of ILO Convention No. 169 on the rights of indigenous peoples was introduced into Parliament on 27 November 2014. The reading of the matter was transferred to the post-electoral new parliament.

258. The national solution contained in the Bill is based on status quo with regard to ownership, tenure and utilization rights of the land and water areas in the Sámi homeland. Instead, the rights of the Sámi to participate in the planning and decision-making regarding the State owned land and water areas in the Sámi homeland as well as the right of the Sámi to utilize these areas to practice, maintain and promote the Sámi culture are developed. The population of the Sámi homeland has for social and geographical reasons during centuries become such that the Sámi and the rest of the population have inhabited partly the same areas and practised partly the same livelihoods.

259. In addition, a Government Bill (132/2015) for the amendment of the Act on Metsähallitus (Finnish Forest and Park Service) has been submitted to Parliament.

C. Follow-up of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action

260. The numerous legislative, administrative, educational and cultural reforms and projects detailed in the present periodic report are partly based on the implementation and monitoring of the Durban declaration and Action Plan in Finland.

D. NGO Hearings

261. The 23rd periodic report was drafted at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) in close cooperation with sectoral ministries and other relevant authorities. For the drafting of the report, written statements were requested from the supreme guardians of the law, the

Human Rights Centre, the special Ombudsmen, the Advisory Boards and NGOs. Requests for comments were sent to 80 different actors. In addition, a hearing was organized at the MFA on 10 April 2015 for above mentioned actors, enabling them to present their views on the draft report.

E. Dissemination of information

262. On 4 September 2012, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued a press release (No. 204/2012) on the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee.

263. Immediately upon their approval, the recommendations were translated into both national languages, Finnish and Swedish, as well as into Northern Sámi. The recommendations were sent in October-November 2012 for information to a large number of recipients, including ministries, the Parliament, the supreme overseers of legality and other ombudsmen, the Supreme Courts, Advisory Boards, the Church and other religious communities, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, research institutes focusing on human rights as well as several organs and NGOs representing minorities. The covering letter included a wish that the actors on the distribution list would distribute the recommendation of the Committee to their constituents as widely as possible.

264. The Convention and its translations in Finnish and Swedish have been published in the Treaty Series of the Statutes of Finland Series (Treaty Series 37/1970). The Statutes of Finland are available at the largest public libraries. In addition, the text of the convention is available in the Government's legal database Finlex and on the website of the MFA. The internet may be used for free at public libraries.

265. Government reports on the implementation of the convention have been published on the website of the MFA, where the Convention has its own page. Also the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee are found on the website in four languages (English, Finnish, Swedish and Northern Sámi).

F. Core report

266. A core report will be submitted in 2016.